

## Consumer Affairs Agencies

*Division of Banks*

*Division of Insurance*

*Division of Professional Licensure*

*Department of  
Telecommunications and Cable*

*Division of Standards*

*State Racing Commission*

Massachusetts Office of Consumer Affairs & Business Regulation

# CONSUMER ADVISORY

## Tax Scams - How to Recognize and Avoid Them

The Office of Consumer Affairs and Business Regulation advises taxpayers to beware of the following scams that are occurring during this tax season:

### Rebates

In the rebate scam, a consumer receives a phone call from someone identifying himself or herself as an IRS employee. The caller tells the consumer that he/she is eligible for a sizable rebate for filing his/her taxes early. The caller then states that he/she needs the consumer's bank account information in order to receive the rebate.

### Refunds\*

If an e-mail promising a tax refund appears in your mailbox, delete it! This scam e-mail tells the recipient that he/she is eligible for a tax refund for a specific amount, and instructs the recipient to click on a link in the e-mail to access a refund claim form. The form asks the recipient to enter personal information that scammers then use to access the e-mail recipient's bank or credit card account.

### Audits\*

The audit e-mail notifies the recipient that his/her tax return will be audited and instructs him or her to follow links to forms that collect personal and financial information.

### Paper Checks

In this telephone scam, the caller claims to be an IRS employee who is calling because the IRS sent a check to the individual being called. The caller states that because the check had not been cashed, the IRS needs the individual's bank account number so that the refund may be sent electronically. In reality, the IRS leaves up to the individual to choose to cash or not cash a paper check. The IRS does not ask for, bank account or similar information, except when taxpayers indicate on their tax return that they are opting for the direct electronic deposit of their refund. The IRS does not contact taxpayers to verify the information.

***\*The IRS does not send unsolicited e-mails about tax account matters to individuals or businesses. Filing a tax return is the only way to apply for a tax refund; there is no separate application form. Taxpayers who wish to find out if they are due a refund from their last annual tax return filing may use the "Where's My Refund?" interactive application on the IRS website at <http://www.irs.gov>.***

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